



# Department Updates

September 2017

## Health & Human Services

**Stacey Frolik**  
**Director**

The beginning of the 2017-2018 Energy Assistance season is near. Regular applications will be accepted beginning October 1, 2017 and will continue to be accepted through May 15th, 2018. Early applications will be accepted by our department once the date is released by the State of Wisconsin. Crisis funds continue to be available year round until the fund is depleted.

DHHS Methamphetamine (Meth) costs for 2016 have been finalized. The total Meth cost for 2016 is \$1,197,127. That is down only slightly from 2015, \$1,206,528. These costs are representative of families and individuals served in the Children and Families Unit and the Behavioral Health and Addiction Unit (including Drug and Alcohol Court) in which Meth has been identified as an issue affecting functioning, safety and well-being. Efforts, internal and external to DHHS, continue to get ahead of the Meth crisis we are facing in Barron County.

Despite the disruption of work that occurred in May

due to the tornado, Public Health did submit all Accreditation application materials. We were notified that the first review of documents has been completed and the next step of the process is a site visit, date not yet determined. We have been appointed and accreditation mentor which is Oneida County.

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) have received word through our partners at the American Red Cross and 211 Wisconsin that a few households displaced from their homes in Hurricane Harvey-affected areas have made their way to Wisconsin. These individuals and families have reached out regarding any support or resources that may be available to them.

DHS and WEM felt it was important to raise awareness among our local partners that your community may see individuals and families that self-evacuate to our state from flooded areas in the affected region. We are currently developing a high level information sheet that can be shared with such visitors (which will be made availa-

ble on the State DHS website).

If you are aware of organizations that would be willing to provide specific resources or services, that information can be provided to 211 so that they can direct callers to those groups, as needed. If you do not know who the 211 contact is for your area, you can provide this information to Burlie Williams with 211 Wisconsin at [211wi-manager@unitedwaywi.org](mailto:211wi-manager@unitedwaywi.org) or 608.246.8272, ext. 3.

The Public Health Department does have the flu vaccine available in stock for children 6 months and older.

Please remember to stay vigilant protecting yourself against tick and mosquito bites as we enter the fall months. Wisconsin has one confirmed case of West Nile Virus and many cases of tick-borne illness.

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## Finance

### Jodi Busch, Finance Director

Summer has flown by in the Finance Department. We worked with CliftonLarsonAllen to finalize the 2016 audit, which was submitted to the State of WI – Dept of Administration on July 31<sup>st</sup>. We also worked with Sequoia Consulting Group, who was onsite for two days conducting the Indirect Cost Allocation Study, with this being finalized in late August.

The last few months have been especially busy with the transition in management of the Waste to Energy Facility. Many processes were brought into the Finance Department. Plant employees are now paid through the Barron County payroll system and all invoices are paid directly through our accounts payable system. New processes have been developed for deposits, billing, and tracking of information. I also have been working with the DNR regarding various reporting and recycling grant application. With new office

staff now in place at the plant, training has commenced, with some duties being passed back to their office. While it has been a very challenging summer, we continue to gain ground every day and I am very optimistic as to the future of the plant.

Amidst all of the WTE transition, the budget process started right on time. Budget Worksheets were distributed to departments the week of July 10<sup>th</sup> and were due back to Finance on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Once received, compilation of the 2018 County Budget took place. Mid August, Net New Construction numbers for 2017 came in at 1.49%. This means that per levy limit rules, we can increase our levy limit ceiling by approximately \$272,000. Fortunately, because we are well below our levy limit ceiling, we don't face the challenges of many other counties to stay within our levy limit. Moreover, because we want to keep that cushion between where we currently are and the levy limit ceiling, we are pleased to report that a preliminary

budget was constructed with over a million dollar cushion between our levy and the levy limit maximum.

Committee meetings are well underway to review and approve the departmental budgets. The first view of the budget as a whole will be in September at the Executive and County Board meetings. In October, a recommendation to the County Board by the Executive Committee will be given. Based on that recommendation, a Budget Publication will be developed and published in all County newspapers. A Public Hearing will be held on November 6<sup>th</sup>, with the County Board finalizing the budget in early November. After the 2018 budget is approved, apportionment sheets will be calculated here in Finance and submitted to the DOR. Next, the 2018 budget will be setup in the County's financial software. The budget process contains many steps and is completed over several months. This whole process will guarantee us a very busy fall season here in Finance.

## Office on Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center

### Leslie Fijalkiewicz, Director

The end of summer means a ramping up of activity at the Aging & Disability Resource Center. Our healthy living programs start up again. Medicare Part D open enrollment starts. Meals on Wheels referrals increase. Requests for rides go up when the first snowfall comes. And the calls from families who are worried about "another winter" start coming in.

Our Centenarian Celebration is November 16<sup>th</sup> at Rolling Oaks Restaurant. This is one of our favorite activities because we get to meet some folks who know all about aging and aging well. Ironically, our intent is to honor those Barron County resi-

dents who are age 100 or better, but in truth, we are the ones who are honored by being in their presence while gleaning their words of wisdom. If you know of someone who was born in 1917 or earlier, please let us know so we can send an invitation. Even if someone is unable to attend we always like to mention their name in the program.

Sip & Swipe Café is one of our newest programs; it's an absolute-beginners workshop to show people how to use a tablet or iPad. Thanks to a grant, we have tablets available for use in the workshops and so far we have 36 graduates, 40 on the waiting list, and are adding 4-5 people per week to the waiting list. A

unique feature of Sip & Swipe is that it's run entirely by volunteers. Ron Gehler, his team of 6 facilitators, and Donna Bachowski, the director of the Chetek Center have done an amazing job with this program.

Our most recent initiative in partnership with Our House and Care Partners/Country Terrace, is Breakfast For Your Brain. The program is intended for active adults who wish to take part in brain wellness activities. It meets the first Friday of every month at the Cameron Senior Center. The workshop filled so quickly that we are already considering more locations!

The beginning of fall also brings the

## Office on Aging / Aging & Disability Resource Center (Continued)

first of many interns. The ADRC is fortunate to have 3-5 interns each year. Whatever their degree, certification, or career goals might be, we have the opportunity to instill in the next generation a greater understanding of what issues older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers face. We get to reinforce what they have learned in the classroom, and expose them to things not found in a textbook. But don't for a second think it is a one-sided relationship. The interns who spend time at the ADRC bring something valuable to us (and I'm not referring to free labor). Interns give us the gift of asking "why?"

Having an intern reminds me of the story about cutting off the ends of the ham. Most people know the story but if you haven't, here's the condensed version...

*Young girl is watching her mom cut the ends of the ham off before baking it and asks her mom why she is cutting the ham like that. Mom says, "Because that's how grandma always did*

*it." So young girl calls grandma and asks why she cuts the end of the ham off. Grandma says "Because that's how my mom did it." So young girl calls her Great Grandma and asks why she always cut the ends of the ham off. Great Grandma says, "Because I never had a pan big enough!"*

I like to think we aren't cutting off the ends of ham, but assumptions like that are precisely the reason it can happen. Some of our programs and services have been in existence for nearly 50 years. Add to that the fact that we have some staff, myself included, that have been working here for 20+ years, and the potential for "because we've always done it that way" is very real.

Interns are not the only way in which fresh eyes and asking "why" keeps our programs progressive and relevant. Our governing and advisory boards also provide that through term limits. At any given time we have board members who are near-

ing the end of their 6 year limit, some who are in those middle years and some who are newly appointed. Even now, we are seeking board members to fill a current vacancy and two soon-to-be-vacancies. If you know of someone in Barron, Rusk or Washburn Counties that would be a great advocate and have an interest in serving on a board, please have them contact me.

And just in case you aren't aware of it, the ADRC in partnership with Dancing Oak Publishing, produces the monthly Barron County Review. You can pick up a free copy at the Government Center, grocery stores, banks, senior housing, pharmacies and a number of other locations around the county. It features a calendar of programs and services along with great articles on topics related to aging, caregiving, living with a disability, nutrition, memory and brain health, Medicare, scams, and it even has a crossword puzzle!

## Veterans Service Office

### Scott Bachowski Veterans Service Officer

The Veterans Service Office has begun their project to become paperless. We began scanning our veterans' files in August and to date we have scanned approximately 300 files of the 7500 paper files that we currently store in filing cabinets. We will have filing cabinets available as we empty them; if interested, please let us know if you would like some cabinets. We estimate the project will take 2 to 3 years to complete. We are pursuing a "Work Study" student from WITC to assist us in scanning files.

The Veterans Service Committee

and Commission recently approved the Veterans Service Office 2018 budget. Our 2018 budget increased less than 1%, we have held steady with very minor increases the past 10 years. In fact, our office operating budget has decreased the past 3 years. The reason this is possible is that we are using technology to submit veteran claims via secure facsimile and directly to the Department of Veteran Affairs via direct upload. We are also using a secure email system to communicate with our Veteran Service Organizations, in Milwaukee, to convey problems and solutions with veteran claims. Thus, our mail and phone budgets are decreasing as we increase our use of technology.

We will be attending our Wisconsin County Veterans Service Officers Association accreditation training and business meeting in Oshkosh from September 18<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup>. After reviewing the agenda, it appears that we will have another very informative and productive training conference. Our Association will again welcome many trainers from the Milwaukee VA Regional Office, law firms that specialize in veteran disability claims, trainers from the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs as well as the Secretary, VA Medical Centers, and representatives from VA National Cemeteries.